

*Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the
Borough of Darlington for the year ending 31st
December, 1904.*

To the Chairman and Members of the
Sanitary Committee.

Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present to you my Annual Report on the Health of the Borough of Darlington for the year ending 31st December, 1904, as required by the Local Government Board. It is difficult to find much that is new to fill the pages of such a document, and matters of fact, embodied in figures, rather than what is sensational must be dealt with in it. I shall as far as possible try to condense these facts, so that they may be presented to your view with as little circumlocution as I can.

POPULATION.

If the population were ascertained by a census every three or five years one might regard the statistical figures as fairly accurate which are dealt with in such a report as this, but when such long intervals occur between the census they can only be approximately so. It is important to take as accurate an estimate of the population as possible from various considerations. We know pretty nearly the number of inhabited houses in the Borough, pretty nearly the number that are built each year, and if we know these numbers we can easily compute the number of inhabitants per house. In a former computation after last census our population was 4·8 per house. At present we hear a good deal about over-crowding, but where this exists I think it is in many cases due to the necessity of securing cheap rooms rather than dearth of houses. The houses that have been built in the last decade are superior to what were provided formerly for the working man's family, and consequently are let at higher rents. Many of these houses are fitted with bathrooms and other conveniences, which greatly increase the price of erection, and of course the rent. I do not think that any small houses have been built of late years to let, say, at a weekly rent of three shillings or three and sixpence a week. When people with narrow means cannot find small houses, they prefer to rent one room at two shillings or half-a-crown a week. In this way the sub-letting of rooms produces over-crowding, and is a great evil, and detrimental to the public health. It is a difficult question to provide houses for the class of people here referred to, as those who invest their money in this way find the class of population who live in cheap houses more unstable, more likely to run away without paying anything at all, and the collecting of rents from such people is more costly; in fact, the property is unproductive. As I have already said, the sub-letting of houses into tenements tends to

overcrowding, and I think this is the chief cause of all the overcrowding in Darlington. The natural increase of population—that is, the excess of births over deaths—for the year is about 650, but as our estimation of the population last year was a low one, I have estimated it at an increase of 1,000, estimating our statistics on a total population of 47,500.

VITAL STATISTICS—BIRTHS.

During the year the births of 759 male children were registered and 690 females, making a total of 1,449, or 85 more than in the preceding year. As usual, the males exceed the females by 69. The number of births registered is a record and beats the previous record year for births, viz., 1882, by one. It will be seen from this that our birth-rate is a fairly good one, though considerably below the county average, and very much below the rate of 20 years ago and upwards. The birth-rate for the year in the 76 large towns is 29·1, with which ours compares favourably, being 30·5 per 1,000 population, while that of the county was 35·6.

DEATH-RATE.

During the year the deaths of 414 males and 383 females belonging to the Borough were registered, making a total of 797, together with 6 males and 6 females who died in the Hospital and Workhouse from districts outside the Borough, and also to these must be added 7 males and 2 females who died in the County Asylum at Sedgfield. These figures give a total of 427 males and 391 females, or 818 deaths gross. From this we must take the 12 outsiders, which leaves a nett total of 806, or 26 less than in the preceding year. This gives a mortality for the year of 16·9, or nearly one per 1,000 less than in the preceding year, and 1·4 less than the general county rate.

INFANTILE MORTALITY

The deaths in children under one year were somewhat less than in the previous year, viz., 199, compared with 253, which gives an infantile mortality for the year of 137·4 per 1,000 births, compared with 185 in the previous year. There is no doubt the greater amount of sunshine and drier atmosphere that obtained had much to do with this result, but something yet remains to be done to still further diminish the sacrifice of young lives. A great number of infants' lives would be saved annually if the mothers of the working classes were sufficiently alive to the necessity for unceasing carefulness, firstly, in the feeding of young children; secondly, in keeping them clean in their persons and surroundings; and thirdly, giving them a sufficiency of fresh air both by day and by night. Children, if they are to grow up healthy and vigorous, must have plenty of pure air, as well as a proper and sufficient diet. If they have plenty of pure air to invigorate them, I think they will more surely survive any errors of diet than they may have to battle with than if their vitality is lowered by being shut up in unventilated, stuffy, and sunless rooms.

ZYMOTIC DEATH-RATE.

The chief infectious diseases for swelling the death-rate under the head of preventible diseases were diphtheria, whooping cough, and enteritis. Measles was epidemic in the third and fourth quarters of the year, but the mortality was not high, considering the numbers attacked. The number of cases of scarlatina was fairly steady during the first three quarters, but declined towards the end of the year, and was of a mild type generally. Enteric fever was not epidemic, except from one source of infection. This was caused by a case arising in the house of a milk-vendor, in the person of a grandchild. There were 9 cases traced to this milk supply, and after it had been stopped only sporadic cases were reported, the cause of which was difficult to ascertain. The following are some of the more important zymotic death-rates per 1,000 :—Measles ·17, Scarlatina ·021, Diphtheria ·29, Croup ·015, Enteric Fever ·105, Diarrhœa ·21, Enteritis ·56, Whooping Cough ·505, Phthisis 1·07, Puerperal Fever ·021, Erysipelas ·042. As phthisis is hardly yet reckoned among zymotic diseases, the total rate per 1,000 excluding this is 2·04.

NOTIFICATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

There has been a decline in the number of cases of infectious disease reported on the previous year of 108, and 230 less than in 1903. The decline was due to the almost entire absence of smallpox. The number of cases of enteric fever was almost four times as great as in the previous year, though the number of deaths was just the same. There has been a gratifying decline in the number of cases of diphtheria reported, though the number is still very large. As I have already mentioned in other reports, this disease does not appear to prevail in the oldest and most congested parts of the town, but in the new streets, where one would least expect to find it. In all probability the disease is propagated in the schools, as most of the cases occur in children of the school-going age. The experience we have had of enteric fever being spread by milk indicates the need for very close supervision of milk shops and dairy premises. An outbreak of fever due to milk infection may quickly assume serious proportions, unless the cause of the outbreak is early detected and removed. There were only two cases of smallpox imported—one in January from Newcastle, and the other in October from Dewsbury. Both of these cases were isolated as early as possible, the contacts re-vaccinated, the bedding burnt, and the premises disinfected, so that the disease was not communicated to any other person from either case.

THE BOROUGH HOSPITAL.

A good deal of difficulty has been felt in getting through the work at the Hospital during the last year, owing to the extensions that are being made to the domestic department for the further accommodation of the nursing and domestic staffs. The number of patients treated was about 130 fewer than in the

previous year, being 223 compared with 358 in 1903. The following are the numbers treated :—Scarlatina, 75 cases with 1 death ; Diphtheria, 88 cases with 4 deaths ; Enteric Fever, 56 cases with 5 deaths ; Septic Cellulitis, 1 case with 1 death ; Croup, 2 cases, both recovered after tracheotomy. Both the cases of imported smallpox were isolated in the Hospital and recovered. During the year 8 cases of scarlatina, 4 of diphtheria, and 3 of enteric fever were treated in the Hospital from districts outside the Borough.

I am glad to say that the present accommodation in the Hospital has been quite sufficient for the patients during the year. There was no overcrowding in any department owing to the fact that the cases were pretty equally distributed over the whole year. The only inconvenience was occasioned by the painting of the Hospital as far as accommodating the patients was concerned, and of course the inconvenience to the staff formerly mentioned

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS ACT.

There are no cases of overcrowding recorded in either factories or workshops. Some of them require improvements in ventilation, though the ventilation that is possible is not made use of, and the working man or woman requires a system of ventilation which is beyond their reach or control. It is useless to expect them to utilise an open window for the admission of air, and therefore ventilators are necessary as well as windows. This is the chief defect in our workshops at present, but this state of things is gradually being remedied. The only other fault one finds is that the floors are not sufficiently often washed, and more dust is allowed to kick about than is good for the health of the operatives. In a general way the condition of these shops is improving, and by visiting and advising, and re-visiting and preaching cleanliness much good will be done in the future. The factories and workshops have been systematically visited and inspected during the year, and in future a list of these will be made and the visits and reports regularly kept, together with any action which it may be necessary to take upon such reports. During the year one workshop was closed on account of there not being separate privy accommodation for the sexes, after notice had been served upon the owner.

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT.

There was no case of unsound meat exposed for sale either by the butchers in their shops nor on the Market stalls, and only one consignment of pork which had become stale in transit was destroyed by the Railway Company. A bag of cockles which had been too long kept was destroyed by the consent of the owner, and as the weather was warm at the time no proceedings were taken, the unwholesome condition of the food being regarded as due to this cause. Samples of whisky, brandy, milk, pepper, mustard, &c., &c., were taken for analysis, and with the exception of 1 sample of milk and 9 of brandy were found

pure. The vendor of the diluted milk was fined 10s. and 18s. costs. We have found here as well as other places that a good deal of what is sold as so-called brandy contains little or no grape spirit, but is "made in Germany," probably, instead of France. At any rate, 9 samples of this spirit were adulterated, and three of the vendors were fined £10 and costs, which in one case amounted to five guineas,

WATER SUPPLY.

The water has been regularly analysed by order of the Committee, and found to be of good quality. A sample of water from a well was taken, and considered unfit for use. The well has not been closed, but after cleaning it will be again analysed and the necessary action will then be determined on. The public supply during the year has been good and abundant.

COWSHEDS, DAIRIES, AND MILKSHOPS.

The cowsheds have been regularly visited, and every effort made to ensure the purity and cleanliness of the milk supply. During the year 27 notices have been served upon cowkeepers to abate either nuisances or defects in their premises. These have all been complied with, or are being complied with, without the necessity of resorting to proceedings. The grandchild of a greengrocer who also sold milk contracted enteric fever, and very soon after 9 cases were reported from families supplied with milk from this shop. Steps were at once taken to stop the sale of milk from this place, so badly fitted for the purpose, and the trouble was at an end. All the 24 cases of milk analysed were of good quality with one exception, and the milkshops and vessels were kept clean and the bye-laws complied with.

SLAUGHTER-HOUSES.

The slaughter-houses were regularly visited and found to be clean, regularly limewashed, and well ventilated. There was no nuisance complained of, and no breach of the bye-laws.

BAKEHOUSES.

The bakehouses were regularly visited, and all found clean and well ventilated with one exception. In this case the floors were dirty and the roof unplastered. Notice was given to have the floors cleaned and the roof ceiled and whitened. On a subsequent visit three or four weeks later these improvements had been carried out, and everything was in proper order.

SCAVENGING AND STREET-MAKING.

During the year several new streets have been made and the footpaths flagged. The streets have been kept clean, and the snow has been quickly cleared after snowstorms. The ash-pits have been cleared with a fair amount of regularity, but not so often as some of them require from their bad construction,

The question of nuisances caused by refuse tips has come up before the Committee on several occasions, and no doubt the question of a refuse destructor will have to be faced and dealt with in the near future.

SANITARY WORK OF THE YEAR.

All the houses where infectious diseases have been reported have been immediately visited, the patients removed to the Hospital in all cases when their consent to such a course could be obtained, and where this was not done home isolation was recommended. In the cases where the patient was removed to the Hospital the bedding was disinfected or destroyed, the rooms cleaned and disinfected, and handbills giving instructions for protecting the others from infection distributed. Whenever the patient was not removed the disinfection was carried out at the end of the illness, and similar handbills and instructions given. In this way 212 lots of bedding were disinfected or destroyed, and 218 houses after the incidence of infectious disease were disinfected.

There were 25 cases of filthy dwellings which received either formal or informal notice, and abatement of the nuisance remedied in 21 of these cases, and 207 cases of structural defects of dwellings received notice, of which 195 were remedied, and 6 cases of overcrowding were dealt with.

Nearly 500 ashpits and privies have been the subject of notices, and 456 had their defects remedied. During the year 29 of the old sunken ashpits have been replaced—18 by water-closets and 11 by small ash-closets. For the removal of deposits of refuse or manure 40 notices have been served, and for defects in water-closets and drains 88 notices. In cases of defects of yard pavements 203 notices have been given, and for defective traps in yards, drains disconnected with sewers, and yard and scullery drains stopped or defective 180 notices. In 10 cases notices were served on owners for keeping animals improperly, and 8 for keeping yards in a filthy condition. Only one case of smoke nuisance was dealt with during the year. Under the Housing of the Working Classes Act 30 houses have been declared unfit for human habitation—3 owing to structural defects, 19 owing to defects in the roof and spouts, and 8 owing to damp from defective drains. In all of these with one exception the causes of the mischief have been remedied, and habitation allowed to be resumed. In company with the Inspector I have visited nearly all the districts of the town, some of them more than once, and in some of the streets we have paid house-to-house visits, and in this way a good deal of useful sanitary improvements have been carried out quietly and unostentatiously. The year has been one of decided sanitary progress. In bringing this report to a close I should just like to refer briefly to a question which has lately been taken up and adopted by other Municipalities. I refer to the question of Lady Health Visitors. The experience of Sanitary Authorities who have appointed one or more of these officials on their

sanitary staffs is almost without exception favourable. I should think that this Committee should take steps to secure the appointment of at least one lady as a tentative measure, and if the course is found to be as advantageous as I anticipate more could be engaged as we found necessary. I feel sure that a properly qualified lady would do excellent work in visiting the poorer class of houses, and teaching the people from house to house the necessity of cleanliness, proper ventilation, and the care and proper feeding of infants. I think in this way much might be done to lessen the infantile mortality and improve the sanitary condition of the least desirable residential quarters.

In conclusion, I have to thank the Chairman and members of the Sanitary Committee for their kindness and support, and my brother officials for their advice and co-operation during the year.

I am, gentlemen, yours obediently,

JAMES LAWRENCE, M.D.,

Medical Officer of Health.

CASES OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE NOTIFIED DURING
THE YEAR 1904.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASE.	Cases Notified in whole district at all ages.	No. of cases removed to Hospital from each locality.
Smallpox	2	2
Diphtheria	140	83
Membranous Croup	4	1
Erysipelas	25	
Scarlet Fever	80	67
Enteric Fever	76	53
Puerperal Fever	4	
Septic Cellulitis	1	1
Totals	331	207

VITAL STATISTICS OF WHOLE DISTRICT DURING 1904
AND PREVIOUS YEARS.

YEAR.	Population estimated to Middle of each Year.	BIRTHS.		Total Deaths Registered in the District.				Total Deaths in Public Institutions in the District.	Deaths of Non-residents registered in Public Institutions in the District.	Deaths of Residents registered in Public Institutions beyond the District.	Nett Deaths at all Ages belonging to the District.	
		Number	Rate.*	Under 1 Year of Age.		At all Ages.					Number.	Rate.*
				Number	Rate per 1,000 Births registered	Number.	Rate.*					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1894.	39,500	1,242	31·4	147	118	576	14·5					
1895.	41,000	1,193	31·4	201	168	636	15·5					
1896.	41,000	1,147	28	153	133	594	14·4		Not	Known		
1897.	41,500	1,191	28·3	148	124	600	14·6					
1898.	42,000	1,181	28·1	168	142	678	15·7			14		
1899.	43,000	1,227	28·5	189	154	680	15·9		7	11	682	15·8
1900.	43,500	1,324	30·4	197	148	763	17·4		15	9	757	17·3
1901.	44,500	1,322	29·7	215	162	710	15·8	94	15	9	704	15·7
1902.	46,000	1,382	30	165	119	691	15·1	97	16	10	692	15
1903.	46,500	1,364	29·3	253	185	856	18·4	92	24	8	832	17·8
Averages for years 1894-1903.	44,850	1,257	29·5	183	145	678	15·7	94	15	10	733	16·1
1904.	47,500	1,449	30·5	199	137	806	16·9	94	11	9	806	16·9

* Rates in Columns 4, 8, and 13 calculated per 1,000 of estimated population

VITAL STATISTICS OF SEPARATE LOCALITIES IN 1904
AND PREVIOUS YEARS.

YEAR.	Population estimated to middle of each year.	Births registered.	Deaths at all ages.	Deaths under one year.
1894 ..	39,500	1,242	576	147
1895 ..	41,000	1,193	636	201
1896 ..	41,000	1,147	594	153
1897 ..	41,500	1,191	600	148
1898 ..	42,000	1,181	678	168
1899 ..	43,000	1,227	680	189
1900 ..	45,000	1,324	763	197
1901 ..	44,500	1,322	710	215
1902 ..	46,000	1,382	691	165
1903 ..	46,500	1,364	856	253
Averages of Years 1894 } to 1903	44,850	1,257	678	183
1904 ..	47,500	1,449	806	199

CAUSES OF, AND AGES AT, DEATH DURING YEAR 1904.

CAUSES OF DEATH.	Deaths at the subjoined ages of "Residents" whether occurring in or beyond the district.							Total deaths of resi- dents or non-residents in public institutions.
	All ages.	Under one year.	1 and under 5.	5 and under 15.	15 and under 25.	25 and under 65.	65 and upwards.	
Measles	8	2	5	1				
Scarlet fever	1		1					1
Whooping cough	24	13	11					
Diphtheria and membranous croup ..	14		10	4				4
Croup	5		4	1				
Enteric fever	5		1	1		3		5
Epidemic influenza	13	2			2	3	6	
Diarrhoea	11	8	1			1	1	2
Enteritis	27	23	2			1	1	
Puerperal fever	1				1			
Erysipelas	2	2						
Other septic diseases	6	1				5		1
Phthisis (pulmonary tuberculosis) ..	52			2	8	38	4	5
Other tubercular diseases	30	3	12	7	2	6		4
Cancer (malignant disease)	41				1	31		7
Bronchitis	65	14	12			8	31	10
Pneumonia	28	2	4	2	3	9	8	3
Pleurisy	4					1	3	
Other diseases of respiratory organs ..	40	14	13	3		3	7	4
Alcoholism (cirrhosis of liver)	5					5		1
Venereal diseases	1		1					
Premature birth	32	32						
Diseases and accidents of parturition	7					7		1
Heart disease	80	1		3	4	40	32	11
Accidents	13		2		1	5	5	3
Suicides	5				1	3	1	
All other causes	286	82	27	10	5	80	82	31
All causes	806	199	106	34	28	249	190	93

FACTORIES, WORKSHOPS, LAUNDRIES, WORKPLACES
AND HOMEWORK.

1.—INSPECTION.

Premises.	Number of	
	Inspections.	Written Notices.
Factories (Including Factory Laundries)	13	3
Workshops (Including Factory Laundries)	32	
Total	45	3

2.—DEFECTS FOUND.

Particulars.	Number of Defects.	
	Found.	Remedied.
NUISANCES UNDER THE PUBLIC HEALTH ACTS:—		
Want of Cleanliness	1	1
*Sanitary Accommodations—not separate for sexes	1	
Breach of special sanitary requirements for bake-houses	1	1
Total	3	2

*. These premises are not now used as a workshop.

